

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-19 (Canceled).

Claim 20 (New): An applicator for an electrosurgical instrument, alternatively for argon-plasma coagulation and cutting, also argon-supported, comprising:

a gas and a high frequency current terminal;

a cutting electrode attached to a gas and high frequency current supply pipe;

an insulating cap configured to detachably fasten the applicator on a handle of the instrument;

an insulating casing tube displaceable relative to a common longitudinal axis of the applicator for exposing or covering the cutting electrode, with the casing tube surrounding the gas and high frequency current supply pipe over a longitudinal section, and a collar or an external right-angle bend at a distal end of the casing tube; and

at least one radially surrounding gas-sealing inhibiting device arranged between an inside of the casing tube and an outside of the gas and high frequency current supply pipe, wherein the inhibiting device allows that a respective position be frictionally fixed at any location of a path of displacement of the casing tube.

Claim 21 (New): An applicator according to claim 20, wherein the inhibiting device is located in a portion of a proximal extension of the insulating cap.

Claim 22 (New): An applicator according to claim 21, wherein the path of displacement is defined by a hitting contact of the collar or the external right-angle bend on

the casing tube with an inwardly projecting edge of the proximal extension of the insulating cap and with a portion for fastening the current supply pipe in the insulating cap.

Claim 23 (New): An applicator according to claim 20, further comprising a consumption-resistant hollow cylindrical, partially outwardly projecting insert arranged at a proximal outer end of the casing tube.

Claim 24 (New): An applicator according to claim 20, wherein the current supply pipe includes a radially surrounding groove or a corresponding notch on its outside for accommodating the inhibiting device.

Claim 25 (New): An applicator according to claim 20, wherein the casing tube includes an inwardly directed, radially surrounding groove or a corresponding notch for accommodating the inhibiting device.

Claim 26 (New): An applicator according to claim 20, wherein the inhibiting device comprises at least one of an O-ring, a profiled elastic sealing strip, and a closed leaf spring.

Claim 27 (New): An applicator according to claim 22, wherein the collar or the external right-angle bend at the distal end of the casing tube effect, in conjunction with a cylindrical inner recess of the insulating cap extension, an additional radial and axial guidance for the casing tube.

Claim 28 (New): An applicator according to claim 22, wherein the collar or the external right-angle bend comprise a groove for accommodating an additional inhibiting device.

Claim 29 (New): An applicator according to claim 28, wherein the additional inhibiting device includes an elastic sealing ring.

Claim 30 (New): An applicator according to claim 20, wherein the insulating cap has a shape of a truncated cone, with a cap closing piece being inserted into a hollow cylindrical recess of an upper surface of the truncated cone.

Claim 31 (New): An applicator according to claim 30, wherein the cap closing piece forms a proximal extension of the insulating cap.

Claim 32 (New): An applicator according to claim 30, wherein the cap closing piece includes an internal collar at an outer end.

Claim 33 (New): An applicator according to claim 30, wherein the distal end of the casing tube is guided and retained by the cap closing piece.

Claim 34 (New): An applicator according to claim 23, wherein the consumption-resistant insert is made of ceramics.

Claim 35 (New): An applicator according to claim 20, wherein the cutting electrode is attached at a proximal end of an inside of the gas and high frequency current supply pipe.

Claim 36 (New): An applicator according to claim 35, wherein the cutting electrode comprises a fastening support pipe at its distal end.

Claim 37 (New): An applicator according to claim 36, wherein the cutting electrode can be adjusted via the fastening support pipe for obtaining a substantially coaxial position relative to the casing tube or the consumption-resistant insert, for achieving an optimal surrounding gas flow in all cases in which the applicator is used.

Claim 38 (New): An applicator according to claim 30, wherein the cap closing piece is integrally connected to the hollow cylindrical recess of the cap.